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HEINERLE: THE PEASANT ARTIST.

BY EMIL FROMMEL.

*Translated from the German by K. W. Bent.
(With permission.)*

BOOK I.—BOYHOOD.

CHAPTER I.

HIS FATHER.

IN the "Dictionary of Artists" the name Heinerle, or, to give it in full, Johann Heinrich Tobias Huber, is not to be found, any more than Lindelbronn on a map of the world. But for all that, did he not live, and become one of the famous men of his time? Just as surely as Lindelbronn is in the world, and boasts as pointed a church spire as any other in the German dominion.

If all renown has its limits, why not his? Besides, every one is not famous who finds a place in the *Encyclopædia*.

Should the courteous reader happen to travel up the Albthal, and in doing so keeps the spur of the Black Forest ridge always on his right from Herrenalb to the edge of the mountain, following his nose, he cannot fail to come to a pair of lonely farm-houses, where any child can say in which direction the church-spire of Lindelbronn lies. And where the spire is, there will the church be, together with the little village round it. It is an old place where the people have gathered round the church and built their houses, as to this day chickens gather under the wings of the hen. For it has only recently been discovered that the church should stand outside the town, and the churchyard half a mile further, because of the sanitary commissioner, and the horrible danger caused by the blessed dead. Once upon a time, Lindelbronn must have been a very defiant little place, for ever since the Swedish war it has an old town wall intersected with embrasures, in which at the present time a colony of

sparrows has made a lodgment, rent free, which nowadays is a consideration; and, more than that, they are secure from the village boys of Lindelbronn, who are as bad as those of Langenschwan, which is saying a great deal, as is well known. But near the sparrows, old Florian Huber had also built upon the town wall, and from the outside his house looked little better than a sparrow's nest. But it exactly suited the man, and so it should always be that the man and the house should suit each other, as was the case with our ancestors, who built their houses around themselves from within, as the swallows of to-day know how to do, and they never change lodgings. So it came to pass that because old Huber was so closely associated with them, the gospel about the sparrows under heaven, which was preached every year on the fifteenth Sunday after Trinity, interested him more than any other. For that our Lord cares for such a pitiful little creature as a sparrow, which can neither do nor understand anything, feeds it, and provides it with winter and summer clothing without measuring it, appeared to him to be one wonder upon another, and he thought it extremely ungrateful of mankind to care for and grieve themselves for a mere nothing, whilst a sparrow does not make one of his grey feathers to grow against the morrow.

Old Florian Huber was, like most of the people in the place, a woodcutter by trade, who fetched the wood from the recesses of the forest and prepared it, when the landed proprietors put it up for auction in the public room of the inn. You would not have found him very highly cultivated; his only book besides the Bible was the broad, deep forest, that noble primer out of God's library in its green binding, with its many leaves and branches, on which sat its doctors and private instructors, the birds. He knew all the trees in the wood; some were his school comrades, just as old as he was, others again were the young generation, and between them stood the old oak and beeches, like venerable ancestors. They furnished him with all sorts of thoughts, and gave rise in him to "occasional prayers," although he knew nothing of the worthy Gotthold Scriverus. So when a tree must be cut down, because the head forester had pronounced sentence of death upon it, it always made him miserable, especially if it was one of his school comrades. Yes, so had they also disappeared one after another, who had studied under the old wachtmeister, who was also the schoolmaster, and

kept hardly any school in the winter, because it was too cold, and very little in the summer, because it was so warm. And how soon also might not death come to him, that great woodcutter who thins the human forest, and does not ask how old the tree is, nor whether the head forester has given his consent. That always suggested an "occasional prayer"; and when a tree had been dug round and the roots loosened, before the last tug with the rope was given, when the tree would give a great sigh and shiver once more through all its branches ere the crown lay on the ground, it always came into his mind that so men through many a trial have the roots of their life loosened and dug round before the last wrench comes, and they, too, do not take their departure without shuddering and giving a long sigh before their head lies still in the coffin.

He also studied social questions in the forest, going down to first principles. For close to each other stood the lofty oak trees, like exalted potentates, and the aspens like the daughters of the nobility; and close by the thick beech trees like respectable burghers' wives, and the birches like cheerful village maidens, down to the shrubs and dwarf fir trees, the proletarians, and to the fungus and lichens, the parasites and sluggards. Yet here all was peace, and none looked jealously on the others, and from the falling leaf of the tall trees the lesser ones drew nourishment, and they again fertilised the tall tree; and when the lightning struck a lofty oak, the little tree at its foot congratulated itself it was but a sapling. Such reflections made Florian contented, and he wished to be nothing more nor less in the world than a woodcutter.

After all this, it will not be wonderful to the gentle reader, when I say, that Florian Huber was not a loquacious man, but in the words of St. James he was "quick to hear, and slow to speak," and did not, like a fool, carry his heart in his mouth, but like a wise man had his mouth in his heart. For he who has such quiet communion with his God, and with his green wood, and is led to Him through many a trial in his private training, who in the cool of the morning and evening walks with his God and opens his heart to Him there, can easily leave talking, to others. Therefore Florian resigned conversation to the Chief Forester, who had besides, a mouth for six, and a hunting knife at his side as big as Goliath's of Gath. So he did not look anxiously into the matter, nor talk much about it, when an

eighth boarder was bestowed upon him while he was in the wood, in the shape of a vigorous little boy. For he thought according to the old wachtmeister's way of reckoning with even numbers, and according to all godly people at all times, that "where seven are satisfied, the eighth shares their food for nothing;" and he believed firmly also that the blessing which children bring enriches and does not impoverish their parents.

CHAPTER II.

"NO. 8."

THIS child, known as "No. 8," born to Florian Huber on October 17, in his house on the town wall, under the Sparrows' Nest (looking at first for all the world like a young sparrow, and baptised three days afterwards), was the subsequently celebrated artist, Herr Heinrich Johann Tobias Huber, native of Lindelbronn, in the Black Forest. Where there is a father and small children in a house, there is wont to be a mother also. And there she was; for a house needs not only a head, but also a heart; and if one is wanting, much is lacking.

But whoever knew Creszentia Huber, knew that she supplied the heart in the house. She was one of those women whose adorning was not that "outward adorning of plaiting the hair and wearing of gold." For ornament she wore a large silver crucifix, which only appeared on great festivals, and was an inheritance from her parents; for the tresses of her hair she used no curling irons, fresh spring water was her only hair wash, and her plaits had been the fashion in Lindelbronn ever since man could remember. But her "adornment was the hidden man of the heart, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit," besides divers other virtues which well become a woman. Towards "her" Huber she was an obedient wife, and called him, as Sarah did Abraham, her "lord." And such an obedient wife who can keep silence, is better than one decked out, who can chatter a great deal. Whoever looked into her clear blue eyes could not fail to observe that she knew many things which she did not talk about. And so it should be. For there should always be a reserve in the little chamber of the heart where the springs are, lest all should be exhausted in the little water channels that flow out at the mouth. When her Huber was silent, then she

could talk, and when he talked, then she held her peace ; for two cannot be talking at once, otherwise it generally ends in a dispute, and that she would not have.

When on her wedding-day she came over in the little cart on which her dowry was placed, which consisted of some old boxes and one new chest, and her old mother, and when Huber met her half way to the edge of the forest and got up beside her, she showed him the large chest in which her wedding portion lay. Upon it a large heart was painted, in which stood the two initial letters of their names, and underneath "Huber" and the date. Then she mentioned that she had had hard work to get it done, for the carpenter had demurred, and wished to paint two hearts separately, or one with her name as was generally done. But she had told him that she and Huber wished to have but one heart between them, not two, and in the heart, her name should not be alone, but his also. She kept to this honourably, and when occasionally, as will happen, there was a rainy day in the house, it was always clear again at eventide, and by the time the sun had set, the fiery sun of wrath had also disappeared, and the full moon shone in peacefully through the chamber window on the two who were inside. That I called her mother a portion of her dowry should surprise no one who knows what a good mother-in-law is to a man. To be sure sometimes he makes a bad bargain, and experiences the truth of the proverb, "I would rather live with a dragon than with a quarrelsome woman."

But that did not happen to Huber, he had carefully considered beforehand what the mother and the rest of the family were like, "for," he thought, "one marries them also." Many do not take this into consideration, and bring themselves much misery and bitterness of heart by their marriages, but he brought a real treasure into his house with his wife. For the old "sick nurse," as she was called, had much experience in many things and was a pious woman, and a prudent to boot, two virtues which unfortunately do not always go together. She had a complete repertoire of songs, and was like an organ on which by only touching the right stops one can play at will either the trumpet or the tender flute. Had she no song ready, yet she always had a saying drawn from the wisdom of the people, and she had moreover a fresh, cheerful mind, for all her age and wrinkles.

At first the newly-formed household consisted of this trio—a trefoil leaf as it were, until it gradually filled with the little inhabitants. And there was always joy in the house when the stork had flown that way and had dropped a little child down the chimney. At such times Frau Huber always sent her husband to the old cousin in Unterdorf, to announce the birth of a little child, and when he returned she was seated in the arm-chair in her Sunday dress, and laid the child, prettily dressed, and washed from the soot of the chimney, in Huber's arms. So had her mother done before her. The last child was always the dearest to her, and Huber consoled himself again with his sparrows on the old town wall, who never complained, when yet another came into the world. Under such circumstances as these was the above-mentioned Heinrich born, or as he was commonly called, Heinerle. Like all men, he brought nothing with him into the world ; but two very clear eyes, a large mouth, a good appetite, and a little trumpet in his throat loud enough for a barrel-organ graced the little man.

The nurse did not fail to make the gossips observe that there was something remarkable about him, because he had such big eyes and so large a mouth. That at all events meant something. His mother laughed, for so the old nurse always said of each village child (just as the barber says to each customer that he has the finest beard in the place); and yet none of her prophecies had hitherto been fulfilled. The nurse must have noticed the smile, for she was on her mettle, and spoke in a manner that showed she was annoyed ; she must know better, and she a score of years older, and had studied in Freiburg and Breisgau, and had never been reckoned amongst the stupid ones there. In short, Frau Huber must believe her this time, and allow she was right.

But for all the attention she gave, her Heinerle did nothing more remarkable than her other children ; she only noticed in him that he was very self-contained, liking best to be alone or with his mother, and he would sit for hours on the house doorstep gazing into the blue sky. However, he asked his mother a number of wonderful questions, which she often could not answer ; amongst others : "If it also struck eleven o'clock in heaven, and what they had for dinner up there ?" This, as well as similar questions, she put down to his big mouth, and thought no more about them. The other brothers and sisters

were a good deal older than he was, for he was quite a late straggler, for which reason he slept longer in his mother's bed, and was allowed to accompany her when she went to the yearly fair, or to her native village.

Then the grandmother died, and he saw death for the first time; or rather, he did not see it. For he had always rejoiced in the prospect that some day the schoolmaster and children would sing before their house as they did before others. He did not know that they only did so before the house of death; and that grandmother had a bunch of rosemary in her folded hands, and that his father brushed his hat with his hand the wrong way so as to give the look of a band of crape; that the people had cakes and wine; all this caused him no sorrow at all, only he could not quite understand that his mother silently wept, as grandmother had such a lovely wreath, and looked so solemn, and the school children sung so beautifully, and they all wore their Sunday clothes. But a couple of days later (he was about six years old), the mother found Heinerle seated at the table. She took no more notice of him, and was lost in thought. He however had a pencil in his hand and drew a face surmounted with a large wreath, then came joyfully to his mother and said: "There, you have grandmother again; now you must not cry any more." His mother smiled as she looked at the likeness, which was by no means striking; but it occurred to her for the first time, that the old nurse might have been right, and that the boy would some day be somebody. But neither understood the deep meaning contained in the child's remark, namely, that it is the most perfect function of art to comfort us by restoring the features of our dear ones to us, so that we may retain those whom death has snatched away.

CHAPTER III.

SCHOOL TIME.

SCHOOL time came, and the mother found it a hard trial to give up her Heinerle, for that meant sharing her child with the schoolmaster. Yet he went, for children were not the "martyrs" that they are now-a days, where even in the village school now "the instructor" lectures over the heads of his scholars. But if the mother had not given a new kreuzer secretly to the master,

who at the end of the lesson was to give it as a reward to Heinerle, and if she had not promised him his favourite dish, he would not have gone again. There he learnt what there was to learn, the only remarkable thing discovered about him being that he was no arithmetician. But the master's forte was arithmetic, and every day he studied further in it, for he calculated all day long how far he could make his little salary go, adding and multiplying, and so he thought that every one must learn to calculate, otherwise there would be nothing but misery; the consequence of which was his firm conviction that nothing would ever be made of Heinerle. But Heinerle acquired better knowledge in the wood, where he often went with his father, and there began his studies. When he had finished helping to dig up roots, he would sit quietly under a tree, and unravel the fibres of the oak-leaves, till only the skeleton remained, which he would trace on paper with a pencil, so that at last he was able to draw all kinds of foliage, not of course of every tree in the world, but of all that grew in the wood of Lindelbronn. If his father had to cut down a tree that was still in its prime, the boy would put in a good word for it beforehand. But the chief forester was the first and last judge, and never repealed a sentence of death, but sent irrevocably, like the Sultan in Constantinople, not a silken cord, but a strong hempen rope, to his "dear subjects."

His father had secretly planned that Heinerle should also become a wood-cutter, and remain with him when the other children went out into the world, so that the stock and handicraft should not die out of the family; but now doubts began to arise in him, whether it would really be so, since the youngster was so pitiful. That a deep nature lay under Heinerle's pinafore showed itself once when the father and son were leaving the wood in the moonlight, singing the song, "Now all the woods are sleeping." The chief forester met them "in the wilderness that was all his own," as the father said; and asked them, "What stupid sort of song that was? Now all the woods are sleeping; *they* had no sleep!" The father was surprised, and said out of respect to the forester, that so it was in the song, and one could hardly alter the song-book. But when the forester struck off into another woodland path and wished them "Good-night," Heinerle maintained that it was true, that the wood rested, and that it was quite different in the night and in the

day-time; it was so mysterious in there when men, especially such as the head forester, were outside. And the father thought that his Heinerle might be more right than the forester, for he was a rough man. By the time they were at the verse "Widespread both little wings," they had reached home, and in the night the father related to the mother what the Forester and Heinerle had said, and now they each bethought them that the old nurse was not entirely wrong, that out of Heinerle some good might come, although he was no arithmetician. And for a long time they pondered that in their hearts.

(To be continued.)

"DER BÜCHERBUND."

BY ELSA D'ESTERRE-KEELING.

XIII.

DEVELOPMENT OF GERMAN HYMN.

AS writers of hymns, Luther and his contemporaries* were not without successors. *Sterbelieder*, *Trostlieder*, *Hauslieder*,† besides, of course, *Kirchenlieder* and *geistliche Lieder*,‡ were poured forth in the century that followed that of the Reformation. *Opitz*, of the First Silesian School,§ elaborated the hymn as he elaborated everything else. Here are two stanzas from his long paraphrase of Psalm civ. :||—

Nun schau, o, Mensch, hinauf und
über dich,
Nach dem, was nicht den Augen
zeiget sich,
Was niemand kann beschliessen in
den Schranken
Der Sterblichkeit und flüchtigen
Gedanken.

Vollbringst du das, mein Herz, und
du, mein Sinn,
Und legst die Last der Erden von
dir hin,
Sagst ab dem Leib, in dem du bist
gefangen,
So wird Gott dich, und du wirst Gott
erlangen.

Now look, O man, above and over
thee,
And see what with thine eyes thou
canst not see,
What none can comprehend outside
that portal
That shuts out Heaven from foolish,
erring mortal.

If that thou do, my heart, my soul,
this day,
And all earth's burden at thy feet
but lay,
Renounce the flesh which thou hast
let enchain thee,
Thou God indeed wilt gain, and God
will gain thee.

* *Vide* "Bücherbund," xii.

† *Dirges*, *Consolation-songs*, *Songs for the Home*.

‡ *Church Hymns and Sacred Songs*.

§ To be treated of in the next "Bücherbund" paper.

|| The translation is here mine, as everywhere when no acknowledgment is made.